XV.

THE CERTAINTY OF THE Future Judgment *Asserted and Proved,* IN A SERMON PREACHED At St *Michael's Crooked Lane, London,* Octob. xxvi. 1684.

By *MATTH. BRYAN,* Lecturer there.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
AND
RIGHT REVEREND
FATHER in GOD,
PETER
Lord BISHOP of *WINTON*,
AND
PRELATE of the *GARTER*,

MY LORD,

YOur Lordſhip having been pleaſed to honour me with a Teſtimonial under your Epiſcopal Seal (beſides a Letter to his Grace my Lord of *Canterbury*) of my Behaviour for about ten Years in your Lordſhips late Dioceſe of *Bath and Wells*, when I removed thence to the Place where I now am; I ſhould juſtly have been condemn'd, had thoſe ſcandalous Reports, which are rais'd concerning me, been true, as the vileſt and moſt ungrateful Wretch living, appearing ſo unworthy of, and contrary to the Character your Lordſhip was pleas'd to give me, proving at once a diſobedient Son to your good

Lordſhip, (to whom I muſt acknowledge my ſelf to ſtand, in many inſtances, more particularly obliged) and a diſloyal Subject to the Beſt of Kings.

This, my Lord, is the reaſon of my inſcribing to your Lordſhip's Name the following plain Diſcourſe (calculated for a common Auditory) which I am even forc'd out of pure neceſſity to make publick (and therefore humbly beg that it may ſhelter it ſelf under your Lordſhip's Patronage) to ſtop the mouth of a flying Scandal, which has wounded my Reputation, and that the Truth may appear, and the World be ſatisfied how unjuſtly my Sermon preached at St. *Michael's Crooked Lane*, *London*, *Octob.* 26. *ult.* was reflected on, and repreſented as Treaſonable and Seditious, and reproaching the Government and the Courts of Juſtice: A heavy Charge and Imputation! which, I doubt not, Good Men (when undeceiv'd) will conclude to be falſe, and that I am notwithſtanding a true and Loyal Subject to the King, the rather, becauſe

Your Lordſhip's moſt Obedient Son, and

Obliged Humble Servant,

Decemb. 10. 1684.

Matth. Bryan.

To the READER.

IT is not out of Ambition to appear in print, to lie upon a Book-seller's ſtall, and be pointed at in a crowd, ὅτος ὅδι —— *that I publiſh the following plain (but practical) Diſcourſe, (fitted for a private Auditory in my Courſe of Preaching, and not deſign'd for publick view) but in a juſt Vindication of my ſelf from thoſe Aſperſions and unworthy Calumnies, caſt upon me by ſome of my Auditors, who out of Ignorance, or Prejudice, at leaſt not well underſtanding, or regarding what was ſpoken, together with the Scope, and Coherence, or out of I know not what raſh and prepoſterous Zeal (but not according to Knowledge) hoping perhaps to oblige the Government, (whereas in Truth by ſuch practices they really prejudice it, whilſt they reproach and abuſe its Friends, that are truly loyal, and neither ſpeak, nor act any thing againſt it, but for it, and that in a lawful Aſſembly) miſerably repreſented my Sermon with ſo black, and frightful a Face, that I was ſtartled at it my ſelf, appearing in their deformed Dreſs, and ſo unlike my Genuine Iſſue (there being nothing which I abhor more than Diſloyalty, Sedition and Treaſon, which, not only my Principles as a Clergy-man, but my Education too, as a Clergyman's Son, do, I thank God, ſufficiently arm me againſt) and therefore took a review of its native Complexion, which I ſhew'd again to my Auditors the Sunday following, the major Part of which, and ſome the moſt judicious, and eminently loyal Perſons, declared it to be the ſame, (without any material alteration) and altogether unlike the monſtrous ſhape, which ſome had made it to appear in. With which, though ſome were ſatisfied, not only my Auditors, but others too, particularly, the Honourable Sir* Richard Lloyd *Knight, Dean of the Arches (to whom a complaint was brought againſt me, which*

which was ſoon after contradicted by the ſame Perſon that brought it, being undeceiv'd by a true account from a very judicious, loyal Perſon, in the Pariſh of St Michael Crooked-Lane, *who was an Auditor of the ſaid Sermon) and alſo his Grace my Lord of* Canterbury, *who has ſince had a true account of the whole matter: Yet I doubt not but there are many, to whom it hath, or will appear with its ugly Vizard, and its blacker Dreſs (which Ignorance, or Malevolence has put upon it) which will provoke them to abhor and curſe the Child and the Parent too.*

To prevent which miſchief, and undeceive the impartial and unprejudic'd, I thought it neceſſary to print my Sermon, which how faithfully and exactly done, I appeal to the moſt judicious Auditors, both in the Pariſh of St Mary Newington *in* Surrey, *(where this very Sermon, that was ſo carp'd at (but not by one of the Auditors there) was preach'd in the Morning) and in the Pariſh of* St Michael Crooked-Lane, London *(where it was preached in the Afternoon) who, I doubt not, will be ready to atteſt (if required) that what is here preſented to the World in Print, is the very ſame, without any material alteration, that was preached in each Pariſh on the* 26th *of* October *ult. and the* 2d *of* November *following, at which times was delivered what was objected againſt, and miſ-repreſented in this Diſcourſe, particularly from* p. 1. *to* p. 18. *which is tranſcrib'd from my Notes, as it was preach'd.*

And whether the whole, or any part of it ſpeaks what my Accuſers did (viz. that I reproach'd and reflected on the Government, and the Courts of Juſtice, ſaying, That there is perſecution in our Courts of Judicature, and that Men are perſecuted there, and could not have Juſtice done them, and that the Judges did take Bribes, *&c.) let the impartial and unprejudic'd judge.*

I pre-

I preſume the ſubtilleſt Head, and moſt critical Cenſor cannot pick out one thing that looks like Treaſon, *or* Sedition, *or* Reflection *on the* Government, *or the* Courts of Judicature.

And how tender a Man ought to be of, and concern'd for his Reputation, is determin'd not only by that famous Oracle, the wiſeſt Meer-man on earth (who obſerves that a good Name is better than precious Oyntment*) but alſo by the great Apoſtle, who (as Biſhop* Sanderſon *obſerves) makes a Slander caſt upon a Miniſter* (qua talis) *to be at leaſt petty* *Blaſphemy: (*Rom. 3. 8.*)* καθὼς βλασφημούμεθα, as we are ſlandered, as we are blaſphemed.

Eccleſ. 7. 1.

Vid. Bp. Sanderſon's Sermons, p. 23.

* Acts 6. 11.

Which Conſideration was perhaps the reaſon that that worthy and learned Prelate preached and publiſhed a Sermon (and that in his younger years, before he was advanc'd to the Epiſcopal Dignity) in vindication of himſelf from a ſevere and unjuſt Imputation.

Vid. Biſhop *Sanderſon, ut ſupra* p. 21. 37.

I hope therefore I ſhall not be blam'd, eſpecially by my Reverend Fathers *and* Brethren *of the* Clergy *(whoſe* Innocence, *at this rate, may ſoon be blaſted by the virulent tongues of ſuch Detractors, who take the liberty to comment on our Sermons, and report them in their own words, at leaſt catching at part of a Sentence, or a piece of a Period, not minding the Scope, or Coherence whereby 'tis poſſible to make foul work with the faireſt diſcourſe that proceeds from the Pulpit) for endeavouring to retrieve the credit of my reputation, and ſtop the mouth of a flying Slander, which getting upon the wings of Fame (that ſwift and often lying Meſſenger, as the Poet obſerves,*

Fama, Malum, quo non aliud velocius ullum,
Mobilitate viget, vireſque acquirit eundo---)

need not be bid to make ſpeed to carry its meſſage through the World. Report, *ſay they in the Prophet,* and we will report.

Jer. 20. 10.

And

And though I need not, I confeſs, (which ſome may retort upon me) ſtand upon the Punctilioes of Honour, or value my ſelf much on that account, being, perhaps, as little in the eyes of the world, as I deſire to be in mine own; yet were I ten times leſs than I am, rather than tamely ſit down under the black cloud of ſo unjuſt a ſcandal, and ſevere an Imputation (neither is it inconſiſtent with Chriſtianity, or the meekneſs of the Dove ſo to reſolve, the crime here inſinuated being not ſtrictly a carnal ſin, as Drunkenneſs, Adultery, *&c. (the reproach whereof, how unjuſt ſoever, I could more eaſily have born, as my* Saviour *did before me) but* Spiritual, *and* Diabolical, *viz.* to deſpiſe Dominion, and ſpeak evil of Dignities*) which a little warm Breath, and brisk Air would eaſily blow off; I had rather (I ſay) die than live, it being determined long ago----* Præſtat penitus emori, quàm per dedecus vivere.

I will detain the Reader no longer than to tell him that I thought fit, for the common good, to publiſh my whole Diſcourſe on this Subject (excepting only the Illuſtrations of ſome Particulars relating to the third Head of Diſcourſe, p. 20, 21. *which I was forc'd to omit, leſt theſe Papers ſhould ſwell too big, (though no more was ſtrictly neceſſary for my Vindication than from* p. 1. *to* p. 18. *as aforeſaid) that it might not be imperfect, in which the Argument is weighty (how weak ſoever the management be) and a mighty Perſwaſive to a virtuous and good Life. And if the production of it in the World, though by an* Evil Cauſe, *has any good Effect towards the furthering of any ones Salvation, and the promoting of his ſpiritual and eternal Good, I have my End, who deſire to live no longer in the World, than I may be ſincerely ſerviceable to* God, *the* King, *and my* Countrey.

M. B.

XV.

2 COR. v. 11. the former Part.

Knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord, we perſwade men——

THE Apoſtle in this and the former Chapter, profeſſeth his Chriſtian integrity with the conſtancy of it, and that upon a double Motive, *viz.* the expectance of Immortal Glory, and the General Judgment. Of the former he ſpeaks in the Cloſe of the fourth Chapter, and the Beginning of this: And as this Motive was before his eye, ſo that of Judgment to come, *ver.* 10. *For we muſt all appear before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.* Which laſt Motive, or Argument he lays down by way of Poſition or Doctrine, and in the Words of my Text draws his Inference from it by way of Application to others: *Knowing therefore the terrour of the Lord, we perſwade men——*

Knowing] *i. e.* being aſſured of the certainty of Judgment to come, which he calls *The terrour of the Lord*, being the cauſe of terrour. *We*] *i. e.* I and the reſt of the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt, do *perſwade men*, *i. e.* preſs and excite and ſtir up and exhort

hort them to their Chriſtian Duties, to Goſpel-Piety, and Obedience.

So that the Remark or Obſervation, which naturally ariſeth from the Words, is this, *viz.*

Obſerv. *That the preſſing and perſwading men to Goſpel-Piety and Obedience by the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt, is grounded upon no leſs Motive than the infallible certainty, and ſeverity, and dreadfulneſs of the future Judgment.*

In ſpeaking to which, I ſhall endeavour to do theſe four things:

I. Clear the Point as to its Inference.
II. Shew you the infallible certainty of a future Judgment after this Life.
III. Enquire into the ſeverity and dreadfulneſs of it, ſtyled here, *The terrour of the Lord*; and then,
IV. and Laſtly, Make Improvement of all by Application.

I. I ſhall firſt of all endeavour to clear the Point as to its Inference, and ſhew you, That no leſs Motive than this, *viz. The infallible certainty, and ſeverity and dreadfulneſs of the future Judgment*, could put the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt upon the ſo earneſt preſſing and perſwading men to Goſpel-Piety and Obedience.

And this will appear by conſidering what other Motive could have any probability to prevail with them.

1. Could they be prevailed with to tell the World of a *Terrour* that they ſhould never feel, and themſelves

[3] ſelves did not believe; and thereupon to preſs Goſpel-Piety and Obedience, and that only as an Engine of State-Policy, to keep men in awe, and Obedience to their Governours, and preſerve Civil Peace, as ſome Prophane Men would have it? If ſo, why then were they not more in eſteem with Rulers and Princes, with the Great and Noble? why were they the Mark of their malice and envy, of their rage and fury, if they were hired as their Politick Servants, and did them ſuch great and acceptable ſervice? Again,

2. Was it Honour they had in their eye? Why then were they the Object of the World's contempt and ſcorn, ſcoft at, and derided, having *tryal of cruel mockings*, reviled, defamed, and *accounted the filth of the World, and the off-ſcowring of all things?* 1 *Cor.* 4. 13.

3. Was it Profit that was the Motive? Surely no: For then our Saviour, and his Apoſtles, and Miniſters would have had a greater intereſt in the World; then they would have had full Cheſts and Barns to boaſt of, as well as others. But 'tis notorious, how great a degree of poverty did await them: Chriſt himſelf not having a houſe wherein to put his head, no Lands or revenues to give him the title of rich or great. And his Apoſtles following him, left their gainful Trades, and were not much richer than their Maſter. Yea, may it not be truly obſerv'd to this day, that the employment of a Miniſter is none of thoſe direct Courſes to Wealth and Riches? whereas other Arts and Employments can raiſe an Eſtate, and advance a Family, they who wait at the Altar, with their Dependents, for the moſt part live in meaner circumſtances. (Not but that God has a Bleſſing for the Poſterity and Sons of the Clergy, as well as others;

many of them arriving to eminent degrees of Greatneſs and Wealth in the World; but then that owes it ſelf not always ſo immediately to their Fathers encouragement and Eſtate in the World, but to their own, through God's Bleſſing upon thoſe Employments and gainful Trades wherein they were educated.)

None of theſe things then could be Motives to the Apoſtles and Miniſters of Chriſt to ſet on this Buſineſs: What Motives then could prevail? Would they be ſo mad and indiſcreet to preſs Goſpel-Piety upon the ſuppoſition of a *Terrour* that they ſhould never hear of, or feel, and which themſelves did not believe, and not hope to be advantag'd by it, either here or hereafter? What encouragement were this, nay what madneſs rather, to preſs an idle and unprofitable Vertue, an uncommanded Obedience, with deſign only to terrifie and affright the World, and in the mean time expoſe themſelves to diſgrace, and ſhame, and contempt, and reproach, and hatred, and perſecution? With what courage or comfort could they hold out to preſs this impertinent, unprofitable buſineſs, and that with ſo much ſweat and labour, weakning their Bodies, and waſting their Spirits, endangering their lives and livelihood? If there were no other Motive but this, how ſoon would they have hung the Wing? how ſoon would the Tongue have faulter'd, and been ſilent, and the Spirits faint, and the Hands and Feet have been weary?

'Tis then certainly no leſs, no more inferiour Motive, than the certain knowledge of the *Terrour of the Lord*, that put them with ſuch earneſtneſs upon this great buſineſs.

'Twas

XV.

'Twas this brought Christ from Heaven; *Knowing the Terrour of the Lord*, he came down *to perswade men*; *knowing*, I say, *the Terrour of the Lord*, the displeasure of the Great God against sin and Sinners, and the certainty of Divine vengeance and everlasting wrath, knowing this, he came into the World to *perswade men*. This made him with so much zeal and earnestness to set upon this Business, to *perswade men*; and that both by his Doctrine and Miracles, his Life and his Death, by his bitter Passion and Sufferings, his Tears and Bloud, his Resurrection and Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Ghost; and still continues to perswade them by his Ministers and Ambassadors, whom he commissions and commands to perswade, and entreat, and beseech, by all the endearments and compellations of Love, *to flee from the wrath to come*, to be reconcil'd to God, to embrace and improve the means of Grace and Salvation: Which hath transported their Spirits with zeal and courage, counting nothing dear, but God's Glory and mens Souls; counting, I say, nothing dear, neither health, nor strength, nor reputation, nor honour, nor livelihood, nor their dearest bloud, which they were content should melt away in the Flames, and be expos'd to the hands of violence, rather than cease to *perswade men*, *knowing the Terrour of the Lord*.

And this, by the way, may serve as an Apology for Ministers. When you hear them boldly and severely rebuking Vice, and reproving sin and Sinners, laying open the horrid and abominable nature, and sad effects and consequents of sin, and so passionately and earnestly perswading men to repentance, to the practice of Vertue and Holiness, and that from the consideration of rewards and punishments to be dispensed in the other World, and those dress'd up in the different

different habit of recommending, or aſtoniſhing, and affrighting circumſtances, proper to each diſtant ſtate: when you hear this, do not cenſure it as a common Lecture of Terrour to awe and affright Children, and the weaker ſort, who are eaſily impoſed upon; as words of courſe, and ſo not much to be regarded; as a Tryal of Skill, and a caſt of our Office; much leſs as a deſign out of malice and hatred to your perſons to expoſe and abuſe you; which will provoke you to be angry, to ſtorm and rage at the Word, and the Preacher of it. No, but rather look upon it and receive it, as Words ſpoken in the deepeſt ſeriouſneſs, and out of true compaſſion and charity to your Souls.

Alas! Sirs! were not ſin ſo dangerous and hurtful to men, were there no future Account to give at the tremendous Audit, were there no ſuch flaming wrath and fiery vengeance as you hear of from the Pulpit, were there no future Rewards for good, and no Puniſhments for bad men, we would never trouble you: For we come upon an unwelcome Meſſage to many, to raviſh their *Dalilahs* out of their Arms, (which may turn their Stomachs, and make them rage, as *Herod* did at *John the Baptiſt*) to take them off from that which they ſo dearly love, which 'tis as as hard to part with, as to part with a dear Member, with a right Eye, or a right Hand; and therefore ſin is compar'd to the Members of the Body:

Col 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your Members which are upon the earth: fornication*, &c.

And no wonder now that the Sinner ſtorms and grows angry; but we muſt not value that. The Chirurgeon would be unfaithful, if he ſhould be loth, or forbear to put his Patient to grief when he ſees his danger: No, he will cut and lance and ſearch the Wound,

Wound, or Sore to the bottom, though he put his Patient to pain, though he cry and lament ſore, and grow angry; he will not ſpare a dear Member, if a Gangrene calls for amputation. The Phyſician will deal plainly with his Patient, and tell him the nature of his Diſeaſe, and his danger, and will make him ſick with bitter Pills, and loathſome Potions, in order to his Cure. The Lawyer will deal faithfully with his Client, and critically examine, and ſearch into every Creek and Corner of his Evidences, and tell him the worſt, and not flatter him, if he finds any thing defective, that he may conſult a Remedy.

Now, Sirs! our Work is much like the Work of theſe: like the Chirurgeon we are to cut and lance with the Sword of the Spirit, and the Knife of Mortification, and to ſearch the Sinners Wounds and ulcerous Sores to the bottom; yea, and to amputate and diſmember too. Like the Phyſician we muſt tell men of their Sickneſs, and their danger, and doſe them with bitter Pills, and loathſome Potions: We are Phyſicians in Ordinary to the King of Kings, and the World is his great Hoſpital, where do lye abundance of impotent Folk, of blind, and lame, and ſick, and diſeaſed, who are our Care; we are bound *ex Officio* to look after them, and muſt deal faithfully, and in ſuch methods as the nature of the Diſeaſe requires. Like the Lawyer, we muſt ſearch and examine our Peoples Evidences for the heavenly Inheritance; yea, like Ambaſſadours, we muſt deliver our Meſſage, whether of Peace, or War. And would you have us flatter and deceive?

Now were there no need of this, we would not trouble men. But, alas! who can ſee his Neighbour's, or his Friend's danger, and not be concerned? What an uncharitable man is he, that ſees his

Neighbour's

Neighbour's Houſe on Fire, and will not tell him of it, and endeavour to ſave him from, or pluck him out of the Burnings? that ſees him drowning, and will not help him? that ſees Thieves breaking in upon him, and will not cry out, and aſſiſt him? eſpecially 'tis the Watchman's Office ſo to do, who will not be loth, or forbear to cry out Fire, at Midnight, or make an Alarm to give notice of Thieves and Robbers, leſt he awake or diſturb the ſecure ſleeping man who is in danger. And, what! ſhall the Watchmen of *Iſrael*, who *ex Officio* are bound to give notice of, and help to quench the ſpiritual Flames, hold their peace and be ſilent? Shall we ſee men all in Flames, expos'd to the devouring Fire, the Fire of Luſts burning within them, evidenc'd by the Flames of Vices without, the Flames of wrath and Divine Vengeance over them, and the Flames of Hell underneath them, into which they are ready to drop every moment? Shall we ſee this, and be ſilent, and not cry out and endeavour to quench the Flames, and pluck them out of the Burnings, and ſave them from that conſuming Fire? Shall we ſee them upon the Precipice of deſtruction, juſt falling headlong into ruine, and not ſtretch out a hand to ſave them? Shall we ſee Thieves and Murderers (the Devil and his Agents) breaking in upon Souls, and not give them notice of it, and run to their aſſiſtance?

You ought therefore (Brethren!) to put a candid conſtruction on the ſevereſt Lectures from the Pulpit; to take the ſharpeſt Reproofs, the moſt bitter Invectives againſt Sin, the moſt earneſt and paſſionate Adjurations, as inſtances of compaſſion, and love to your Souls, and faithfulneſs to him that ſent us. Believe it, 'tis the ſin we hate, while we reprove, but yet

IV.

yet love the Sinner. And though ſome perhaps may preach Chriſt *out of envy* (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) and others for the ſake of the Bag, with *Judas*; yet, I doubt not, there are many, who have higher Ends and aims, *viz.* God's Glory, and the ſalvation of Souls, who can truly ſay with the Apoſtle here, *Knowing therefore the Terrour of the Lord, we perſwade men.* Phil. 1. 15.

I will ſhut up this with that wholeſome Advice of St *James* and St *Peter* concerning hearing and receiving of the Word preached, *Jam.* 1. 19,20,21. *Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, let every man be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak, ſlow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God. Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs, and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the ingrafted Word, which is able to ſave your Souls.* To which let me add that of St *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 1, 2. *Wherefore laying aſide all malice, and all guile, and hypocriſies, and envies, and evil ſpeakings; as new-born Babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.*

But here may ſome ſay, If all this is true, that there is a future State, a Day of Judgment coming, ſuch a *Terrour of the Lord* to be reveal'd hereafter, Miniſters do well to be ſo earneſtly and paſſionately concern'd for the Souls of men, to *cry aloud and ſpare not*, to tell them of their Sins, and warn them to *flee from the wrath to come*: but are you ſure you are not under a miſtake, that you do not erre in the Foundation? Are you ſure there is ſuch a future Judgment as you ſpeak of? What evidence or aſſurance have you of the certainty of it?

This I ſhall anſwer; and therein, I hope, give you ſatisfaction in the next Particular which I am to ſpeak to, *viz.* to ſhew you,

II. The infallible certainty of the future Judgment. Now the certainty of a future Judgment after Death is declar'd and evidenc'd to the World by a threefold voice. *The Voice of Scripture, the Voice of Conſcience,* and *the Voice of God's Juſtice.*

Firſt, *The Voice of Scripture.* The Jews had a confident Tradition amongſt them, That bleſſed *Enoch,* who was tranſlated to Heaven, had left two Pillars, as ſacred to Poſterity, wherein were fairly engraven thoſe two great Prophecies, one of the firſt Deſolation of, and Judgment upon the World by water; not many years before which came, God remov'd him, as a Jewel to an heavenly Cabinet, that his eyes might not ſee it. The ſecond Prophecy in a Pillar of Stone, of the Diſſolution of the World by Fire againſt the final Judgment. The latter Prophecy, concerning the final Judgment, is warranted by Scripture, *Jude* 14, 15. *And Enoch alſo, the ſeventh from Adam, propheſied of theſe, ſaying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his Saints, to execute vengeance upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches which ungodly Sinners have ſpoken againſt him.*

There is nothing that the holy Scripture is more plain and poſitive in, than aſſerting a Day of Judgment. Death and Judgment are the Twin-Siſters of the ſame Womb of Decree. *It is appointed unto all men once to dye, and after that the Judgment.* The ſad certainty of Judgment cloſeth up that Ironical Expreſſion of the Wiſe man, or rather a wiſer than He, in reproof of wanton youthful Sinners, *Eccleſ.* 9. 11. *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes:*

Heb. 9. 27.

XV.

eyes: But know thou, that for all theſe things God will bring thee into Judgment. Our Saviour does often very poſitively and expreſly mention a Day of Judgment, as we may ſee in all the four Evangeliſts. And the Apoſtles are often beating upon this Argument. It were endleſs to enumerate Particulars. So poſitive is the Scripture in this Point, that it obſerves to us, that the very Day is appointed, and the Judge named, *Acts* 17. 31. *He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the World in righteouſneſs, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.*

There are three Days have an Emphatical Note ſet upon them: the Day of Creation, the Day of Redemption, and the Day of Judgment.

1. The Day of Creation, which *open'd the Door of Time.*

2. The Day of Redemption, which is call'd, *The Fullneſs of Time.* Gal. 4. 4.

3. The Day of Judgment. This ſhall ſhut out Time, and uſher in Eternity. And this Day is Emphatically call'd *The Day of the Lord, the Day of Chriſt,* and *the great Day,* and *the great and terrible Day of the Lord,* and *the Day of Vengeance,* and *the Day of Redemption,* and *the Day of refreſhing.* 1 Theſſ. 5. 2. Phil. 2. 16. Jude 6. Joel 2. 31. Eph. 4. 30.

That's the firſt Evidence of the certainty of the future Judgment, *the Voice of Scripture.* The Second is,

Secondly, *The Voice of Conſcience*; and that both natural, and enlightned.

1. Natural Conſcience, which is affrighted at the hearing of a Judgment to come. *Felix* trembled at it, *Acts* 24. 25. *And as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs and temperance and Judgment to come, Felix trembled.* As St *Paul* preached to him of righteouſ-

neſs and temperance, his guilty Conſcience reflected on all his paſt acts of injuſtice and intemperance; and when he heard of the Grand Audit, the dreadful Judgment, at which he muſt account for all his faults, the mighty *Felix* trembled. 'Twas too harſh a Note, and jarring Sound, and unpleaſant Muſick for his delicate Ears and accuſing Conſcience to hear, and therefore preſently diſmiſs'd the Preacher, *Go*, get thee gone, ſays he, *for this time, and when I have a more convenient ſeaſon, I will call for thee.*

Though the Athenians mocked when they heard of the Reſurrection of the dead, yet not at the hearing of the Day of Judgment. The Heathen, by the very Light of Nature, had a ſenſe of Divine wrath and vengeance, which would purſue Sinners. Thus the barbarous People in the Iſland of *Melita*, where St *Paul* arriv'd after his Shipwrack, when they ſaw the Viper leap out of the Fire, and faſten upon his hand, Acts 28. 3, 4. *they ſaid among themſelves, No doubt this man is a Murderer, whom though he had eſcaped the Sea, yet vengeance ſuffereth not to live.* Why, whence had they this Notion of vengeance? Where had this barbarous People theſe Notices? What Goſpel-Preacher ever arriv'd there before, to preach to them this Doctrine of the Divine wrath and vengeance? This Preacher dwelt within them. 'Twas the Witneſs and Light of God within them, which made diſcoveries of the heinous Nature, and Guilt of Murther, and the vindicative Juſtice of the inviſible Powers, which, they believ'd, will call every man to an account for his moſt ſecret Guilts. That's a famous Inſtance of the Heathen Mariners in *Jonah*. *Jon.* 1. The Mariners there being affrighted at the terrible and unuſual Tempeſt, (which God, for *Jonah*'s ſake, ſent out into the Sea) reſolve among themſelves (*v.* 7.)

to

XV

to cast Lots, that they might know for whose cause that Evil was upon them: Which intimates, that they believed that the most secret faults were not unknown to the Omniscient Being; and therefore resolv'd to cast Lots, which, they apprehended, did not fall fortuitously and by chance, but by Divine direction, and the guidance of an invisible hand. So *Solomon* observes, *Prov.* 16. *ult. The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.* And though the Lot fell upon *Jonah*, who confest that he was a Fugitive Prophet, and that for his sake the Sea was tempestuous, and that the only Expedient to asswage its raging, was to cast him over-board, which he bid them do: yet the men were afraid, being loth to contract the guilt of Murder, knowing that 'twas a crying sin, and that the voice of his Bloud would cry aloud, and plead against them before the invisible Judge of the World; and therefore they tugg'd hard to get the Ship to Land, but all would not do, the Sea being more and more tempestuous; wherefore being forc'd to throw him over-board for their own safety, yet they did it with Cries and Prayers and earnest Supplications to the great God, deprecating the guilt of Murder, and the cry of innocent Bloud, *v.* 14. *Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent bloud.* Jon. 1. 12.

And if Natural Conscience is so much affrighted at the thoughts, and hearing of Judgment, how much more,

2. An enlightned one; A Conscience enlightn'd by the Light of Scripture, which gives the truest measures of sin, and Divine wrath and vengeance. The Christian has the best and truest account of the nature of sin, and the sad consequents of it, is

suppos'd

ſuppos'd to know and underſtand it beſt. And ſo he does, and therefore is ſufficiently affrighted at its ghaſtly looks, when he is under an apprehenſion of a ſpeedy approach to Judgment: Witneſs the cries and groans, the ſighs and lamentations of the ſick dying Sinner, whom you may hear, if you ſtep into his Chamber, as he lyes languiſhing upon his ſick Bed, lamenting and curſing his wicked life, and bewailing his ſins with all the aggravating inſtances of abhorrence and deteſtation. Why, what's the matter? What ails the man? How comes it, that he is now ſo troubled at ſin, who before never fear'd it? Why, 'tis the Witneſs of God within him, whoſe mouth was ſtopt before, that thus ſpeaks. His Conſcience is awaken'd, and does laſh and ſting him with a ſenſe of guilt, and the fiery vengeance, ſhews him what he has done, and whither he is a going, that he is making his trembling approach before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt.

That's the Second Evidence of the certainty of Judgment, *viz. the Voice of Conſcience*; The third is,

Thirdly, *The Voice of God's Juſtice*, which requires that there ſhould be a future Judgment. They who will not be convinc'd by Scripture, may perhaps by this Argument, The conſideration of God's Juſtice, together with the State of Affairs, and things in this Life.

They who have any ſenſe of Religion, and believe there is a God, muſt believe him to be juſt, that he is the juſt and righteous Governour of the World, a Lover of Juſtice, and will adminiſter Juſtice to his Creatures. Now, in regard we are not capable of an immediate converſe with God, who is a Spirit, and inviſible, he is pleas'd to converſe with us by men, by Creatures like our ſelves, and does appoint

ſome

ſome as his Vice-gerents, his Delegates and Subſtitutes here on Earth, to execute the Laws of Juſtice, and make an equal diſtribution of it, in giving rewards, and inflicting puniſhments, according to the nature and merit of the actions of men, and to render to every one his due.

Now 'tis notorious, that Juſtice is not univerſally and impartially executed in this Life. The vertuous are not always rewarded, nor the vicious puniſhed, according to the different nature of their actions. Of which I could give you various Inſtances: As,

1. In the Caſe of Perſecution. Good men, that fear God, are many times perſecuted for the true Religion, as the Martyrs in the *Marian* Days, and other Proteſtants in *Chriſtendom*. Theſe were good, and yet receiv'd evil; they had not the reward of their Vertue here. What ſhould I ſpeak of that Cloud of Witneſſes, that noble Army of Martyrs mentioned in the 11th of the *Hebrews*, who had *tryal of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, yea moreover of bonds and impriſonment, were ſtoned, were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword; wandred about in Sheep skins, and Goat skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the World was not worthy?* On the other ſide, their Perſecutors fared well, though they did ſo ill; did not receive the recompence of their Vices, and wickedneſs, and cruelties, and blaſphemies; had not their puniſhment in this Life, liv'd in pleaſure, and dy'd in peace, *i. e.* outward peace.

And now where is the Juſtice of God, in rewarding Vertue, and puniſhing Vice, if there is no future Audit of theſe matters, if theſe things eternally ſleep thus, if the perſecuted ſhall never be rewarded, and their Perſecutors never be puniſhed?

But God is juſt, and will ſee Juſtice done, and impartially

impartially executed. So the Apoſtle tells the perſecuted Chriſtians. 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 6,7. *It is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you: and to you who are troubled reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels.* Again,

2. In the times of confuſion, and licentiouſneſs, and rebellion, when *there is no King in Iſrael*, then *every one does what ſeems good in his own eyes*; Vice and wickedneſs walk bare-fac'd and uncontroul'd; and the plundering Thief, the bloudy Murderer, and Traytor goes perhaps to his Grave in peace, yea, with the Pompous Solemnities of a Royal Funeral.

3. Yea, in Times of Peace, and the regular Adminiſtration of Juſtice, Vice, though it dare not walk ſo impudently, bare-fac'd and uncontroul'd, yet may lurk in Corners, and skulk up and down in ſecret, and eſcape the Magiſtrate's eye; the Thief, the Murderer, the Traytor may be quick of Foot, and ſwift of Wing, and fly from Juſtice, and may never be overtaken by it in this Life.

Yea, even in Courts of Judicature 'tis impoſſible that Juſtice ſhould be univerſally and equally adminiſtred, (let none miſtake me, as if I deſign'd to aſperſe, or reflect on our Governours, and the Reverend Judges of the Land, but I obſerve in general that) I ſay, 'tis impoſſible, even in Courts of Judicature, and the beſt upon Earth too, (where *Judgment runs down as waters, and righteouſneſs as a mighty ſtream*) that Juſtice ſhould be always equally diſtributed. For (not to ſpeak of the corruption of the Judge's heart, and the blinding of his eyes by Bribes (which *turns Judgment into Gall, and the fruit of righteouſneſs into Hemlock*) which is not impoſſible, conſidering that he is but a man: I ſay, not to ſpeak of this,

Amos 5. 24.

Cap. 6. 12.

this, but) ſuppoſing the Judge to be as juſt as *Job*, (of whom God teſtifies, that there was none like him in the Earth, *a perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eſchewed evil*) one whoſe eyes cannot be blinded with Bribes, or prejudice, or partial favour, or malice; yet they may be blinded with untruth upon miſ-information. Some perjur'd Villain may deſperately ſwear his Neighbour out of his Eſtate, or good Name, or Life. And the Judge nothwithſtanding is to proceed *ſecundum allegata & probata*, according to the Evidence, whether true or falſe; for he ſees through the eyes of others: and ſo every one may not have Juſtice done him: Sometimes the guilty eſcapes, and receives not the demerit of his Crimes, is not dealt with according to the evil *he hath done in his Body*. On the other ſide, the innocent may fall a Sacrifice to miſtaken Juſtice, receive according to the ſuppoſed evil he hath not, and not according to the real good *he hath done in his body*: the Judge the mean while remaining really and invincibly ignorant of the truth upon miſ-information; and yet may be ſaid to do Juſtice; he does it intentionally and formally, though materially and by accident it proves otherwiſe. But that's reſerv'd to the ſcrutiny of the ſupreme Judge, it falls under his cognizance, *who ſearcheth the hearts, and tries the reins*; who, as *Solomon* ſpeaks, *will bring every work into Judgment; with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Job 2. 3. Eccleſ. 12. ult.

The certainty of which Judgment is methinks ſufficiently evinc'd by the Obſervation of theſe things; that Juſtice is not, no nor cannot be univerſally and impartially adminiſtred in this Life, that good men have not always the reward of their Vertue, nor wicked men the recompence of their Vice

and wickedneſs: therefore, God being juſt, and the God of Juſtice, and the juſt Governour of the World, who is concern'd in the Affairs of Mortals, and ſits in the Seats of Judicature, and ſees and records all that's done in his Book of remembrance, the great Regiſter of humane actions, there muſt neceſſarily come a Day, when all things ſhall be audited, and examined, and tryed before him, and all things ſet to rights, and a juſt Judgment paſs upon all, and every one receive (as 'tis worded in the Context) *the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good, or bad.*

So much for the ſecond Particular, which I undertook to ſpeak to, *viz.* The certainty of a future Judgment. Come we now in the third Place, to enquire,

III. Into the ſeverity and dreadfulneſs of this Judgment, ſtyled here *The Terrour of the Lord*; it being the cauſe of Terrour, and that both to good and bad, and that both in this life, and that to come.

In this Life, 'tis a Terrour even to good men, which keeps 'em in a holy awe, and cauſeth them to *work with fear and trembling.* They often look back towards the laſt things, and caſt an eye on the dreadful Tribunal of *Jeſus Chriſt*: which keeps 'em in a holy awe, fearing to offend him who ſhall be their Judge. It frights 'em from ſin, makes 'em afraid of the very appearance of evil: For though a Child of God acts from love, (which is the great and ingenuous Principle which moves him) yet that love is mixt with fear; 'tis the love of Sons, which is not a ſawcy, a malapert, a too bold and ſupercilious, a too familiar, wanton love; but a reverent, ſubmiſſive, humble love, a love that has an allay of fear,

fear, fear of diſpleaſing and offending their Father, whom it reſpects not only as good, and hating Vice, but as powerful, and able to puniſh it. In a word, 'tis not unmixed fear, which is the fear of Slaves, nor unmixed love, which is the love of Wantons, or at leaſt of Equals, who may love, but do not fear. In this holy awe and fear the thoughts of the dreadful Judgment do eſpecially keep the Children of God (neither let it be thought Legal Preaching ſo to affirm) yea, their holy performances are mixt with fear; they *work with fear and trembling*; not ſuſpecting God's faithfulneſs, but their own, often thinking thus with themſelves, How ſhall I be able to hold out in the laſt hour, in my dying agonies? How ſhall I withſtand the Storms of Hell, and *quench the fiery Darts of* the Devil? How ſhall I be able to appear before the great Tribunal? How ſhall I give up my Accounts there? Should God be ſtrict to mark what I have done amiſs, how ſhould I be able to *ſtand in Judgment, or to anſwer him one of a thouſand?* What if all theſe ſervices of mine ſhould be conſtrued then to be but hypocriſie and formality? What if God ſhould not accept my perſon, and owne my performances? What if he ſhould fling back my ſervices as Dung, upon my Face, accounting it (as he did the Jews) but *as the cutting off of a Dog's neck; and the offering of Swines blood in Sacrifice?* What if my ſins ſhould appear hereafter unpardon'd, and my Obligations uncancell'd? What though I am not far from the Kingdom of God, yet if for lack of one thing I ſhould fall ſhort of it? What if this covetouſneſs and baſe ſpiritedneſs, this worldly-mindedneſs and uncharitableneſs, this paſſion and peeviſhneſs, this ſtubbornneſs, this ſtiffneſs, and oppoſition, and diſobedience to my Governours, this deſire of

Phil. 2. 12.

Epheſ. 6. 16.

Iſaiah 66. 3.

revenge and heart-burning and animoſity; what if this, or any of theſe ſhould ruine all, and ſhut me out of Heaven? Lord, therefore, prays he, let me part with every thing that thou doſt hate, and embrace that which thou doſt love and command, that I may appear before thy *Tribunal* with courage and comfort!

Thus the thoughts of Judgment ſtrike a holy awe and dread into the hearts of God's Children, and do ſucceſsfully affright 'em from ſin. It is thus a *Terrour* even to good men.

And eſpecially 'tis a *Terrour* to wicked men, and impenitent Sinners, when under any affliction, or the apprehenſion of approaching Death. But after Death, eſpecially, 'twill be ſo; when the Judgment-Day is come, 'twill be *Terrour* with a Witneſs.

'Tis ſuppos'd 'twill be a kind of Terrour to good men; which is gathered from that expreſſion in the *Theſſalonians*, 1 *Theſſ.* 1. 10. *To be admir'd in all them that believe.* Even in admiration it ſelf there is a kind of mixture of fear and Terrour, through an overplus and overflowing of expectation, and raviſhing, exuberant wonder, as ſome are obſerv'd to weep for joy.

But in wicked men all that's purely dreadful ſhall meet together.

But more particularly, this dread and Terrour, which will fall upon wicked men, the Enemies of our Lord, ariſeth from theſe four things:

1. The ſight of the Judge.
2. The manner of his coming to Judgment.
3. The Accuſation of their own Conſciences.
4. The Nature and Characters of the Judgment: Which will be,
   1. An Univerſal, a General Judgment.
   2. An

2. An exact, an accurate, and critical Judgment.

3. A juſt and righteous Judgment.

4. The final Judgment.

5. A Judgment that will ſentence to an eternal ſtate, either of happineſs or miſery.

But perhaps ſome may be here diſſatisfied, being ready to demand, Whether none ſhall be ſentenc'd to an eternal ſtate till the laſt and general Judgment? What then ſhall become of departed Souls after Death, till the General Judgment? Shall they be kept in ſome *Middle Place*, in ſome *Limbus Patrum*, or *Infantum*?

To this I anſwer: As there is a General Judgment, at which the Body and Soul being re-united, ſhall appear, and receive Sentence together; ſo there is a particular Judgment of the Soul by it ſelf, at its departure from the Body. That the Souls of good men, immediately after Death, are carried to Heaven by the Angels, to receive the Sentence of Abſolution, which ſhall be pronounced by Chriſt, who will place them in the Manſions of Glory, is moſt certain: as may be gathered from the Caſe of *Lazarus*, *Luke* 16. 22. compared with 2 *Cor.* 5. 1.

And I humbly conceive, (with ſubmiſſion) which is not unwarrantable by Scripture, (as is intimated in the Caſe of *Dives*, *Luke* 16. 23.) that Chriſt Jeſus, the Judge of the World, by virtue of his Regal Office (which he doth now execute) as he ſends out his Angels, which are *miniſtring Spirits*, to carry holy Souls into Heaven, ſo he commiſſions his Angels too, to take the Souls of wicked men, immediately after their ſeparation, and deliver 'em to the Devil, that cruel Jaylor, the Keeper of the Infernal Priſon, who inſtantly draggs 'em away to Hell, there to be bound

(as

Jude 6. (as 'tis ſaid of the evil Angels) *in everlaſting chains under darkneſs to the judgment of the great day*; and in the mean time to be tormented, and puniſhed according to their capacity; and that in purſuance of the ancient Sentence, pronounced long ago; *He that be-*
John 3. 18,36. *lieveth not is condemn'd already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.*

Thus having diſcours'd Doctrinally of that great Fundamental Point of Religion, the *certainty of Judgment* to come, a Day of *Judgment* after this Life, together with the dreadfulneſs of it, ſtyled here *The Terrour of the Lord:* It remains now

IV. and Laſtly, that we make ſome improvement of it by Application.

And here, firſt of all, I hope I need not uſe Saint *Peter's* Apology to you (how needful ſoever 'tis amongſt others in the World) for the Lord's ſlackneſs, and delay in coming to Judgment; which he directs to thoſe Scoffers of the laſt times, 2 *Pet.* 3. 3. *Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt days Scoffers, walking after their own luſts, and ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the Fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation.*

I hope there are no ſuch *Scoffers* here, though with ſorrow, and ſadneſs, and lamentation I might ſpeak it, and obſerve it, they abound too much in the World, yea in *Chriſtendom* it ſelf, and this reformed Part of it; men of an Atheiſtical, ſhall I ſay, or Anti-Chriſtian Spirit, who laugh and mock at the Doctrine of a *Day of Judgment*, as a wild *Chimæra*, the idle Dream and fancy of a melancholy Preacher, the effect of an inquiſitive, contemplative Head, and the ſtrength of imagination; being ready to ſay, in the Words of theſe *Scoffers* here mentioned by St *Peter*,

Where

Where is the promiſe of his coming? &c. *i. e.* Where is the Promiſe, or Prophecy fulfill'd, that Chriſt ſhall come to judge the World? for ſince the death of *Adam* and the Patriarchs, and the Prophets, and Chriſt himſelf, who told the World of a Day of *Judgment*, the World continues as it was, no alteration appears; and 'tis like to continue ſo for ever.

Now this mocking and ſcoffing and infidelity owes it ſelf, St *Peter* obſerves, partly to their Luſts, partly to their wilful ignorance, and inadvertency and inconſideration. Which (in regard there are ſo many in the World that are ready to join Iſſue with theſe *Scoffers* here) I will take particular notice of, both to obviate their Atheiſtical Objections, and Anti-Chriſtian ſcoffs, and to antidote you againſt the infection of a contagious Air.

1. Then, It owes it ſelf partly to their Vices and Luſts: [*Scoffers, walking after their own luſts*] Some men ſo long abandoning themſelves to Vice become Atheſtical, and deny God; for 'tis their intereſt there ſhould be none: and upon the ſame Grounds they become Anti-Chriſtian, and deny Chriſt; deny his Divinity and Authority and Veracity, his Reſurrection and Aſcenſion into Heaven, and his coming to Judgment: For 'tis their intereſt that he ſhould never come; whoſe coming will be ſo terrible to all his Enemies; 'twill be to the perdition of ungodly men.

2. It owes it ſelf partly to their wilful ignorance, and inadvertency, and inconſideration, and that of three things:

Firſt, God's Power and Providence, both in the Creation and deſtruction of the World.

Secondly, The nature of God, and his meaſure and account of time.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, His patience and long-ſuffering.

First, God's Power and Providence, both in the Creation and deſtruction of the World, *ver.* 5, 6, 7. *For this they willingly are ignorant of, That by the Word of God the Heavens were of old, and the Earth ſtanding out of the Water, and in the Water; whereby the World that then was, being overflowed with Water, periſhed. But the Heavens and the Earth which are now, by the ſame Word, are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire, againſt the Day of Judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.* The ſumm and force of which Argument is briefly this: God made the World (for it could not make it ſelf) and having the power over it, did once deſtroy it, *i. e.* the face of it, with the things in it, by water: and he has the ſame power over it ſtill, and can deſtroy it (as he has told us he will) by fire. If he could do the former, he can as eaſily do the latter. *Noah* propheſied of the former, and it came to paſs; and the Prophets, yea the great Propher, Chriſt himſelf, has propheſied of the latter; and why ſhould we not believe it? To this I might add, that other Prophecies in Scripture concerning Chriſt have been fulfill'd, particularly that concerning his coming in the Fleſh; and why ſhould we diſ-believe this of his coming to Judgment?

Secondly, The Nature of God, and his Meaſure and Account of Time, *ver.* 8. *Be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day, q. d.* You think it a long time e're Chriſt come to Judgment; and therefore conclude he will never come, judging of the Lord by your ſelves, not underſtanding and conſidering his Divine Nature, which is Infinite, Immenſe, Omniſcient and Eternal. He does not look upon things, and meaſure time as we do. He is not

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ſubject to ſucceſſion and mutation, as we are. He ſuffers no Flux of Time. There is no time paſt, or to come, with him. He does by one infinite Act of Intuition behold, and comprehend all things paſt and to come, as preſent: they all exiſt before him in one eternal *Now*. There is nothing, to ſpeak ſtrictly and properly, ſhort or long in his ſight, or account of things. *One day*, which ſeems ſo ſhort with us, is with him as long as a *thouſand years*; and a *thouſand years*, which appear ſo long to us, are with him as ſhort *as one day*. Thoſe Periods of Time, that ſeem ſo long unto us, are with him but as a moment. So *Moſes* obſerves, *Pſal* 90. 4. *A thouſand years in thy ſight are but as yeſterday* when it is paſt, (which is infinitely leſs than yeſterday when it was preſent) *and as a Watch in the Night.*

This the Heathen were ſenſible of by the Light of Nature, aſcribing Immenſity to their Gods: Θεοῖς οὐδὲν μακρὸν εἶναι, ſays *Pythagoras*; There is nothing long with the Gods. And Divine *Plutarch*, ſpeaking of the late vengeance of the Deity, obſerves, Τοῖς Θεοῖς πᾶν ἀνθρωπίνου βίου διάσημα, τὸ μεδὲν ὄν----- All the Interval of humane life, is to the Gods nothing.

This, Saint *Peter* obſerves, theſe Scoffers are wilfully ignorant of, at leaſt inconſiderate; and therefore talk at ſuch a mad and ſenſleſs rate, and give way to, and indulge their Atheiſm and infidelity.

And againſt this ignorance and inconſideration of the Nature of God, and his meaſure and account of Time, he cautions even the Friends of Chriſt, that they might not be diſcouraged with the thoughts of the *Lord's ſlackneſs* in coming to *Judgment*; or be tempted to entertain an Atheiſtical Anti-Chriſtian Opinion that he will never come, and ſo laugh, and mock at the Doctrine with theſe Scoffers here: and

therefore he greets them with an endearing compellation [*Beloved*] which is an evidence that he ſpeaks to the Saints. *But* (*Beloved*) *be not ignorant of this one thing* (*of which theſe* Scoffers *are wilfully ignorant* and inconſiderate) *that one day*, &c.

3. This Scoffing and Infidelity owes it ſelf to their wilful ignorance and inconſideration of God's *patience* and *long-ſuffering*, *v.* 9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe*, (*as ſome men count ſlackneſs*) *but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance. The Lord is not ſlack, as ſome men count ſlackneſs*; *i. e.* as if he had chang'd his purpoſe, or broke his promiſe, or were unwilling or unable to keep it, and fulfil it. He is not ſlack that ſtays long, but that ſtays beyond his appointed time, or that comes not at all. The Lord will not defer his coming to Judgment one moment beyond his appointed time. *He that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry*; *i. e.* beyond his own appointment. 'Tis not then becauſe he has forgotten his promiſe, or cannot keep it, or has over-ſlipt his appointed time, that he deferrs coming to Judgment; but out of infinite compaſſion and kindneſs to Sinners, being *long-ſuffering*, *not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.* Which theſe ungrateful Wretches are not ſenſible of, and therefore ſcoff and mock, kick and ſpurn at the Divine Bowels, abuſe that clemency which keeps 'em out of Hell, trample upon that patience which bears with their follies, and waits for their repentance, deſpiſe that love, and goodneſs which ſuſpends the fearful vengeance. How paſſionately does the Apoſtle expoſtulate with ſuch as theſe! *Rom.* 2. 4. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his Goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the Goodneſs of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

O that my Voice could this Day reach the ears, and pierce the heart of every ſcoffing Atheiſt, and hardned, blaſpheming Sinner in this Kingdom! I would be bold to ask him ſeriouſly, Doſt thou think, O man! that the God that made thee, is not able to puniſh thee? that he that created and preſerves thee, cannot judge thee? that he that governs and upholds the World, is not able to deal with ſuch a weak, filly Creature as thou art? that he, in whom thou doſt *live, and move, and haſt thy Being*, is not able to deſtroy thee, and execute vengeance on thee? and therefore doſt dare him to his face, and bid him do his worſt againſt thee, and accelerate the ſlow-pac'd vengeance, laughing and mocking at the Divine threatnings, and the Doctrine of the future Judgment, as a thing which thou doſt not fear, and ſhalt never feel, ſporting with Hell and the Devil, bidding him take and rot and ſink thee, laughing at the Great Judge, and bidding him damn thee if he can; what elſe is the meaning of thoſe direful Curſes, thoſe horrid *God-damn-me*-Execrations, which pollute the Air, and wound the ears of God and men? I do not think that theſe men ſeriouſly deſire damnation, but out of a daring bravery, mock and deride God himſelf, and affront him to his face, telling the World, that they do not fear him, nor his threatnings, nor all the powers of Hell, which he can ſet againſt them; that they are ſo little afraid of his damning power, that they will damn themſelves in a frolick, or bid him damn 'em if he can, and haſten his threatned Judgment.

A very ill and ungrateful uſe of his patience and long-ſuffering! But 'tis ſuch as the Wiſe man ſpake of, and obſerv'd long ago, *Eccleſ.* 8. 11. *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, there-*

fore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil: and St *Paul* here intimates, and ſadly obſerves, and bewails in this his paſſionate Expoſtulation, *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his Goodneſs*, &c. But hear, O deſpiſing, ſcoffing, ungrateful man! Hear what follows, *v.* 5. *After thy hardneſs, and impenitent heart thou treaſureſt up unto thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgment of God*, who will render to every one according to his deeds. For though the Lord is *long ſuffering*, yet he will not be *ever-ſuffering*. But the day of the Lord will come, as St *Peter* obſerves, *ver.* 10. and it will come ſpeedily, *as a Thief in the Night*, unlookt for, and ſo ſurprize: or as 'tis worded, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 2, 3. *The day of the Lord ſo cometh, as a Thief in the night, for when they ſhall ſay, Peace and ſafety, then ſudden deſtruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a Woman with Child, and they ſhall not eſcape.*

Secondly, This Doctrine of the certainty, and ſeverity, and dreadfulneſs of the future Judgment may ſerve to awaken ſecure Sinners out of their ſinful and dangerous ſecurity.

As there are ſome that Atheiſtically ſcoff at Religion, ſo there are others that are ſufficiently careleſs of it; do not ſpeak, but act againſt it; who live vicious lives, and are led by their paſſions and appetites, and are regardleſs of the World to come, and ſtupidly and ſecurely ſinful. They are perhaps more carnal and ſenſual than the former, though not ſo Diabolical. If there are any ſuch here, let me ſeriouſly ask them, Sirs! Do you believe the Bible to be true? Do you believe the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith? that there is a God that made the World, and governs it, that you have immortal Spirits within you, that are capable of endleſs happineſs or miſe-

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ry, that you muſt dye, and come to Judgment, appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, who ſhall come from Heaven to judge the quick and the dead? Do you believe all this? You'll readily anſwer, Yes that we do, God forbid we ſhould be Unbelievers, we can ſay our *Creed* as ſincerely and devoutly as the beſt. Can you ſo? What! and live in ſuch manifeſt contrariety and oppoſition to what you believe, and the terms of ſalvation, as if all this were falſe, as if all were cheat and impoſture, as if the Goſpel were a Fable, or an idle Romance! For God's ſake, Sirs! be ſerious, and conſider, and do not ſuffer your ſelves ſo tamely to be impos'd upon, and baffled by your Spiritual Enemies, thoſe that hate you, and will laugh at your folly, and triumph over your miſery; Do not live the reverſe of your Reaſon and Religion too, and contradict your Faith and Perſwaſion, and ſuffer your ſelves to be fool'd out of that eternal happineſs, which you ſay you hope for, and loſe the beſt and greateſt intereſt, which is more valuable than all the Treaſures and inſtances of happineſs in this World, which you muſt ſhortly leave, and dye from, when nothing here below, neither Riches, nor Friends can help you, but only an effectual ſaving intereſt in the Judge of the World: who will ſhortly *be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that do not obey his Goſpel.* 2 Theſſ. 1. 7, 8.

O that I could make ſome ſecure Sinner here to tremble, and effectually warn him to *flee from the wrath to come! Awake, thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light.* Epheſ. 5. 14.

Thirdly, It exhorts us to Holineſs. And indeed this Doctrine is a powerful diſſwaſive from Vice, and perſwaſive to Vertue: a diſſwaſive from Vice, becauſe

cauſe it will be certainly and ſeverely puniſhed; a perſwaſive to Vertue, becauſe it will be certainly, and amply rewarded.

I doubt not, but there are ſome that are very indifferent, as to the State of happineſs in the other World; for which they are not greatly concern'd, but could be content to part with it, provided they might not be miſerable; they could be content that their Bodies and Souls too ſhould ſleep eternally. They could be content perhaps not to be rewarded in Heaven, ſo that they might not be puniſhed in Hell. But know (Chriſtian!) that there is no *medium* here. If we are not rewarded, we ſhall certainly be puniſhed; if we are not happy, we muſt be miſerable. If we do not go to Heaven, we muſt to Hell. If we have not the enjoyment of God, we muſt have the company of Devils for ever. So that holineſs is indiſpenſably neceſſary, not only to intitle us to Heaven, but to keep us out of Hell. And there is no greater, or more forcible Argument to perſwade to holineſs, than this of *Judgment to come.* This is the great Argument the Wiſe man uſeth to perſwade both to negative and poſitive holineſs. Thus, in the 11th of his *Eccleſiaſtes, ver.* 9. he does tacitly exhort to negative holineſs; *i. e.* he does by a ſharp and keen, but pleaſant Irony diſſwade from Vice, and youthful Luſts, and ſinful Pleaſures, *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes:* there follows a terrible *But*, which is like the Damp to the Candle, or the Death's Head to the Egyptian Feaſts, a Cooler to the heat of Luſt, and, like *Belſhazzer's* hand upon the Wall, daſheth all that mirth and jollity: *But know thou, that for all theſe things God will bring thee into Judgment.*

And

And *Chap.* 12. *ver.* 13. he exhorts to poſitive holineſs (not excluding negative) *i. e.* to the practice of Vertue, and doing good: *Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole Duty of man.* And this he preſſeth by the ſame Argument, the great Motive of *Judgment to come*, *ver.* 14. *For God ſhall bring every work into Judgment, with every ſecret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.*

This is the great beaten Argument that both the Prophets and Apoſtles are frequently upon, and ſpreading before the eyes of men. Moſt of the weighty Exhortations in Scripture (like the Scales upon the Beam) are faſtned upon this: therefore work, walk, run, ſtrive, deny your ſelves, *be ſtedfaſt,* 1 Cor. 15. *ult.* *unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* 'Tis the great Argument both to Active and Paſſive Obedience. Saint *Paul* obſerves it to be ſo, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7, 8. *I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord the righteous Judge ſhall give me at that day:* It follows, *and not to me only, but to all them alſo that love his appearing.* And the ſame Apoſtle does by this Argument ſupport the Spirits of thoſe who ſuffer'd for the name of Chriſt, whoſe invincible patience and faith in perſecution and tribulation he applauds and glories in, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 14. aſſuring them *ver.* 6. *It is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled reſt with us, when the Lord Jeſus ſhall be revealed from Heaven*, &c. And St *James*, *Chap.* 5. *ver.* 7, 8. exhorts to patience under tribulation by this Argument, *Be patient therefore, Brethren, unto the coming of the Lord:* which he obſerves will be as

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ſure as the joyful Harveſt after Seed-time, for which the Huſbandman waits with patience: *Behold, the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the Earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain: Be ye alſo patient; ſtabliſh your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*

This is the great Pillar and Under-prop to ſupport the Spirits of men both in doing and ſuffering the Will of God. Alas! It would be comfortleſs labour, could we not look over the Burden to the Reward; unpleaſant Work, where there is no expectation of Wages; dull and heavy and diſcouraging Service, where there is no hope of recompence, or of any advantage.

'Tis true, Vertue is in it ſelf lovely, and ſome ſay its own reward. But God is not content that it ſhould be ſo; but propounds a real Reward as the End of Vertue: which he allows us to regard, and look to, as our great encouragement to all vertuous Actions.

'Tis recorded as an Act of *Moſes*'s Faith, and a Point of his Praiſe, that he had an eye *to the recompence of reward, Heb.* 11. 26.

'Tis not unworthy of a Chriſtian, as if he were to be thought a Mercenary to do this. 'Tis true indeed a Chriſtian muſt not have *amorem mercenarium*, but he may have *amorem mercedis*; though not a mercenary love, yet a love of the reward. Though he may not ultimately eye his own reward, yet he may in a ſecondary and ſubſervient manner. God's Glory muſt be our chief and ultimate, but our own intereſt may be our ſecondary and ſubſervient End. God will have none of his Servants to ſerve him for nought: they *ſhall in no wiſe loſe their reward:* which he allows us to look to with *Moſes* here, who had

had *reſpect unto the recompence of reward*, which ſupported him under doing and ſuffering for God, *v.* 25, 26. *chuſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon: eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the treaſures of Egypt:* the reaſon of which eminent acts of ſelf-denial and reſignation is aſſign'd in the following Words, *For he had reſpect unto the recompence of reward.*

And as it ſupported him, ſo it has and does others too. This ſupported St *Paul* in the mouth of the roaring Roman Lyon *. This ſupported St *Stephen* under the Showre of Stones; He lookt to the recompence of reward, and ſaw it in his Redeemer's hand; *the Heavens were open'd* to him, *and he ſaw Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God.* This ſupported the Martyrs under their Fiery Tryals; whilſt their Bodies were melting at the Stake, their Souls were inflam'd with holy ardours, and fortified with invincible courage, their Faith giving 'em a proſpect of *Jeſus ſtanding at the right hand of God*, not with fading Garlands, but immarceſſible Crowns of Glory in his hand, to ſet upon their triumphant heads.

* *Nero.*

Acts 7. 55, 56.

Indeed without this, how ſoon would the Spirits faint in the beſt Chriſtian! In all the Inſtances of Mortification, and Self-denial, and Suffering, and Perſecution for Religion, could he not look to the recompence of reward, what diſcouragement would he labour under! He might thus argue with himſelf: What do I do! I am a Lover of Religion, and am hated for it; I deny my ſelf in point of the profits and pleaſures of the World, which others wallow in to ſatiety; I do good, and receive evil; am vexed and troubled and perſecuted in this World, whilſt others are at reſt. And to what end is all this? What!

that I ſhould live like a Fool, and dye like a Beaſt? And ſurely ſo it would be, were there no future reward for him to eye, and have reſpect to. St *Paul*'s Hypotheſis is a Great Truth, and the Conſequence natural, 1 *Cor.* 15. 19. *If in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we are of ll men moſt miſerable.* Only there is a comfortable *But* which turns the Scales, converts the Hypothetick into a Categorical Propoſition, in the next Words: *But now is Chriſt riſen from the dead, and become the firſt-fruits of them that ſlept*; who ſhall riſe with him too, and appear at Judgment, *the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt.*

The thoughts of which, as it ſtrikes unſpeakable Terrour into ill men, (perhaps here, as well as hereafter) ſo it comforts and refreſheth, ſtrangely enlivens and animates, invigorates and encourages good men to, and in all the Inſtances of their Duty, both in doing and ſuffering. What will they ſtick at? What difficulties dare they not encounter with? What Obſtacles can they not remove, or break through? What Lyon in the way ſhall diſcourage them, or turn them back? What ſhall divert them from purſuing ſuch great and ſure rewards, which are before their eyes, which they ſhall one day certainly receive? What ſhall turn *them* out of the way of the Lord, whoſe eyes are fixed on this Glorious Object? Shall the Enchantments or bewitching Charms of ſinful Pleaſures allure, or the thundering Peals of Perſecution fright 'em thence? May not ſuch make St *Paul*'s triumphant Challenge, *Rom.* 8. 35. *Who ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword, or any other Creature whatſoever? Nay, in all theſe things we are more than Conquerours through him that loved us.*

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Go on then (Chriſtian!) with courage and comfort, and let thine eye be ever fixed on this Glorious Object, look to the recompence of reward, have an eye to the Glories that *are within the Veil*, act Faith upon the things unſeen, keep a conſtant eye upon the *Judge* of the World, and the great *Tribunal*, and let thy Meditations on it be frequent, and deep, and ſerious: and then leave the way of the Lord, if thou canſt; then let the pleaſures of ſin bewitch thee, and turn thee aſide, if they can, *like a broken Bow*; then leave the narrow, and walk in the broad way that leads to deſtruction, then turn thy face (which now looks Heaven-ward) to the Regions of darkneſs, if thou canſt; then apoſtatize from thy Religion, and renounce Chriſtianity, bid adieu to the Communion of Saints, and aſſociate with the blacker Spirits, and the Cabal of Hell, if thou canſt; then let the World, the Fleſh and the Devil tempt thee to evil, ſeduce, conquer and triumph over thee, if they can; then ſhrink and faint, hide thy head and deny thy *Maſter* in the Storms of Perſecution, thoſe bloudy Showres, and prove a baſe, cowardly Deſerter, if thou canſt; then let thoſe fiercer, ruder Winds of Hell, thoſe turbulent *Euroclydons*, ſhipwrack thy Faith, if they can: there is no danger ſurely if thy Anchor-hold be *ſure and ſtedfaſt, faſtned within the Veil.* Heb. 6. 19.

In all the Inſtances of Duty, in all the Turns of Providence, in all the Occurrences of humane Life, in all the Temptations either of the *World*, or the *Fleſh*, or the *Devil*, always remember there is a Day of Judgment coming, when wicked men ſhall be puniſhed, and good men ſhall be rewarded: then thou ſhalt have thy reward, though thou tarrieſt long for it; a reward that will abundantly compenſate all

thy trouble, all thy labour, all thy love, all thy ſervice and ſufferings for thy Lord and Maſter; a reward that will be infinitely ſatisfactory and Glorious, that infinitely exceeds all the Honours and Glories and Names of Happineſs in this lower World: which Earthly Crowns and Scepters cannot purchaſe, nor the United Power of Earth, and Hell rob or deprive thee of; which Devils will envy thee, and wicked men wiſh for, as well as be amazed at, who ſhall
Wiſd. 5. 1, &c. ſtand trembling at the dreadful Barr, whilſt thou art exulting, on the Throne; who will ſtand aſhamed in their poverty and nakedneſs, whilſt thy brighter Glories and Royal Robes are putting on, beholding with horrour what is *done to the man whom the King delighteth to honour.*

O terrible, and yet O comfortable glorious Day! A Day indeed of gloomineſs and blackneſs, of horrour and aſtoniſhment, a Day of *Terrour* and the blackeſt grief, and the deepeſt ſorrow to the Enemies, but a Day of comfort and joy, a Day of mirth and gladneſs to the Friends of Chriſt! A Day of *refreſhing*, as St *Peter* calls it, *Acts* 3. 19. *When the time of refreſhing ſhall come from the preſence of the Lord.* 'Twill be truly a time of *refreſhing*; *refreſhing* to the *weary*, tired Traveller, when he comes to ſit down at reſt; the Chriſtian that was burden'd, and *weary, and heavy-laden* with corruption and ſin, who ſhall then have a true, intire and perfect reſt; *refreſhing* to the buffetted, tempted, afflicted Saint; *refreſh-*
Cant. 1. 6. *ing* to the weather-beaten, *ſun-burn'd* afflicted Church
Luke 21. 28. of Chriſt. A Day of Redemption, as our Saviour ſtyles it, full and compleat Redemption, Redemption from all ſin and temptation and miſery; full Redemption from ſorrow and tears and ſuffering, when ſorrow ſhall be no more, and all tears ſhall be wip'd away.

away. So the Spirit aſſures us in the *Revelation*, ſpeaking of the Immunities of that Bleſſed State, *Rev.* 21. 4. *And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain.*

Fourthly and Laſtly, Is there ſuch infallible certainty of Judgment to come? Is there a Day of Judgment coming, when we muſt all appear before Jeſus Chriſt, the Judge both of the quick and dead? O then let us make preparation for it, (which it concerns us all to do) and that ſpeedily; and here I might give you theſe following Directions, which I ſhall but name.

1. Get your Accounts ready. Look into your ſelves, and examine your ſtate; how it ſtands between God, and your Souls, that you may not be ſurpriz'd, when you ſhall be ſummon'd to *appear before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt.*

2. Do nothing now which you dare not account for then, which you would not then hear of.

3. Buy, and put on your Wedding-Garments, and get your *Lamps trim'd* and furniſh'd with *Oil* to meet the *Bridegroom.* Rev. 3. 17. Mat. 22. 11, 12. —25. 1, &c.

4. Make Chriſt, who is the *Judge*, your *Friend.* And that muſt be done,

Firſt, By keeping his Commandments, eſpecially thoſe which are more peculiarly his, thoſe Laws which have their immediate Inſtitution and Sanction in the Goſpel, particularly that of *the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.* Which they that deſpiſe, and contemn, and neglect, may ſadly remember and conſider, that 'tis *his Ordinance* who will be their *Judge.*

Secondly, By obliging his Friends. And how that is to be done, he himſelf intimates, St *Matth.* 25. 35, &c.

5. Be

Matth. 25. 13. 5. Be always upon your Watch.

6. Add to Watching Prayer. This is our Lord's Advice, St *Mark* 13. 33. *Take ye heed, watch and pray, for ye know not when the time is.*

I will conclude all with St *Peter*'s Exhortation, which he makes from this very Doctrine of the final Judgment, 2 *Pet.* 3. 11, 12. *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved,* (*i. e.* seeing that this World, and all things here below, shall have an End, and Christ shall come to Judgment) *what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness! Looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God*----- and *ver.* 14. *Wherefore* (*Beloved*) *seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.*

FINIS.